

Buena Ventura Pico Adobe  
920 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County  
California

HABS No. CAL-243

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42. SANTA  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California

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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CAL-243  
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BUENA VENTURA PICO ADOBE

920 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, California

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REPORT

Prepared by David Gebhard, August 1965

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Jack E. Boucher, Photographer, October 1960

WEST AND SOUTH ELEVATIONS

SKETCH OF PLAN by David Gebhard, August 1, 1965

Buena Ventura Pico Adobe

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## Part I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION.

- A. Name: Buena Ventura Pico Adobe
- B. Location: No street address; located in the center of the city block bounded by Anacapa Street to the west; East Carrillo Street to the North; Santa Barbara Street to the east and East Canon Perdido Street to the south (see site plan); house now visible from Canon Perdido across new parking lot.
- C. Present owner: Mr. and Mrs. T. Suski.
- D. Present Occupant:
- E. Present use: One family dwelling.
- F. Brief statement of significance: A characteristic example of a simple, single room adobe house, to which was later added a board and batten lean-to at the rear.
- G. Physical History:
1. Ownership: The house is indicated on the Warkenrueder's Map # 2 Santa Barbara as belonging to Ventura Pico, although according to the records it was not deeded to him until 1858. Pico was listed as the owner of the property in 1874; and in 1875 it was sold by him to Dr. Samuel Knox. It was inherited from Dr. Knox by his daughter Mrs. Gertrude Knox Feeley. After her death it was sold in 1964 by her estate to T. Suski.
  2. Date of erection: before 1852.
  3. Description of the original structure:  
The west gable end of the house can be seen in a late 19th century photograph of the Dr. Knox brick house. The adobe brick of the wall may be seen in this photograph, but there is the remains of white plaster on the lower part of the building. No chimney is visible in this photograph. The present single board thick board and batten wall must have been added to the house in the late 19th or early 20th century. The date of the fireplace and its chimney is unknown, nor is it possible to tell whether the original building had a porch across its south wall. The milled rafters and roof sheathing of the main roof and of the porch seem to be contemporary with the north lean-to addition.
  4. Historic events and/or personages: none.
  5. Published and unpublished views:
    - a. Site shown on Warkenrueder's Map # 2 of the City of Santa Barbara, 1852. In the

collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

- b. The house is just barely visible (more in a general than in a specific form) in the ca. 1887 Panoramic View of Santa Barbara, Published in Santa Barbara, n.d. In the collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

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- c. House visible behind north side of Dr. Knox brick house, in 19th century photograph, undated; in the collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

6. References:

Cullimore, Clarence, Santa Barbara Adobes.  
Santa Barbara Book Publishing Co., Santa  
Barbara, 1948, p. 123.

David Gebhard  
August 7, 1965

## Part II: Architectural Information:

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- A. Name: Buena Ventura Pico Adobe.  
Address: No street address; located in the center of the city block bounded by Anacapa Street to the west; East Carrillo Street to the north; Santa Barbara Street to the east and East Canon Perdido Street to the south (see site plan); house now visible from Canon Perdido across new parking lot.
- B. Number of stories: one
- C. Type of wall structure:  
1. Original house: adobe.  
2. Addition: single board, board and batten wall.
- D. Layout:  
Original--single room to which was added a lean-to addition to the rear.
- E. General Statement: Architectural interest and merit.  
As late as the 1890's Santa Barbara boasted a number of simple one and two room adobe structures. The Pico adobe is the only single room adobe still standing within the city which has not been drastically altered and "restored." Because of its modest nature it presents a far more realistic picture of the average Spanish and Mexican house, than any of the other adobes which are still preserved in the city.
- F. General Statement: Condition of the fabric.  
The adobe and the board and batten walls, as well as the roof timbers and sheathing appear to be in remarkably good condition.
- G. Detailed Description: General.  
(see Part I, G. Physical History)
- H. Overall Dimensions.  
Adobe structure: South front 26' 1"  
East wall 20' 2"  
Single board, board and batten lean-to addition:  
north wall 26' 1"  
east wall 8' 7"  
Porch(along south front of building) 26' 1" x 8' 11"
- I. Foundations: None of the foundation, either of the adobe section or of the wood board and batten section are presently visible. It is reasonable to assume that like the other adobes in Santa Barbara, that a roughly cut local sanstone was laid in an adobe mortar.
- J. Wall construction: The adobe walls vary between 1' 0" to 1' 6" in thickness. The walls of the rear lean-to addition are composed of a single 1" x 12" redwood board, with 1" battens proved on the exterior and interior of each vertical joint. Two

tie boards occur at the floor and roof level of the wall.

- K. Porches: The south front porch as it now exists is either a more recent addition to the house or a rather complete remodeling. The floor is of brick (not at all typical of mid 19th century adobe houses in and around Santa Barbara. The four wooden post(of fir) are certainly 20th century. It is of interest to note that the southeast terminal post of the porch has been placed outside of the low adobe wall which defines the east side of the porch. The occurrence of a low (in this case stepped wall which rises toward the house) wall at one end of the open corridor porch occurs on several of the 19th century adobe houses in Santa Barbara (for example on the Hill Carrillo Adobe, Calif. 25.).
- L. Chimney: A single fireplace and chimney have been placed in the west gable end of the house. The chimney is not visible in the earlier photographs of the building. The design of the fireplace opening inside would seem to argue that the chimney and fireplace were added around 1910-1930 (rather characteristic of the Spanish Colonial Revival).
- M. Openings: Doorways and doors.  
The five splayed openings (now two windows and three doorways) could all have been original with the house. The heavy undecorated wood door frames are probably original, although the doors themselves appear to be of a much later date.
- N. Openings: Windows.  
The two double hung windows may well have been part of the original house(?).
- O. Roof: Shape, covering.  
The pitch of the roof is identical to that seen in 19th century photograph of the house, although the present roof rafters and wood sheathing appear to be more recent. The present machine cut shingles are 20th century. There is no evidence that this house was ever covered with a tile roof.
- P. Roof : Cornice, eaves.  
A single Board (1" x 6") is used as a fascia for the projecting gable ends of the house. A similar board connects the rafter ends of the porch. The rafters of the porch and of the lean-to section are exposed, as are the roof sheathing boards.

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- Q. Roof: Dormers, cupolas. None.
- R. Floor plan. (see accompanying plan)  
Main room (of adobe section): 16' 10" x 22' 6"  
Kitchen (in wood lean-to) 8' 3" x 10' 11"  
Bsth-dressing room: 8' 3" x 12' 9"  
South Porch: 8' 11" x 26' 1"
- S. Stairways: none
- T. Flooring: 1" x 6" tongue and groove fir flooring in house (original?); brick floor in south porch.
- U. Wall and ceiling finish:  
Lime plaster on adobe; lean-to, painted wood.  
Wood rafters and wood sheathing left exposed throughout house and painted.
- V. Interior doorways and doors:  
The two simple undecorated wood door frames on the north wall of the main room may or may not have been original with the house. The two interior doors would seem to be contemporary with the lean-to addition.
- W. Interior trim: All interior wood work, simple undecorated surfaces.
- X. Hardware: The door lock, handles and butt hinges are probably of a later date; most likely 20th century.
- Y. Lighting: No indication of 19th century lighting.
- Z. Heating: Fireplace, flush with the interior surface of the west gable wall. No mantle provided.
- AA. Site: General.  
According to Warkenrueder's Map # 2 of the City of Santa Barbara in 1852, the Pico property was a small plot of ground lying north/northwest of the north wall of the Santa Barbara Presidio. The house is shown as being located at the northwest corner of the property. In fact, according to the map the west and north walls of the house lay directly on the property line.
- BB. Orientation and General setting:  
The house basically faces south, southeast. The house is now situated in the center of the city block with the Knox brick house lying to the west on Anacapa Street and the Caneda or Presidio Adobe lying to the south, southeast. A new parking lot has recently been placed between the house and Canon

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Perdido Street. This parking lot comes almost up to the front (south) porch and up to the west wall of the building. The handsome gardens, shrubs and trees which until recently surrounded the house were entirely destroyed with the building of the new parking lot.

CC. Enclosures: none known.

DD. Outbuildings: none known

EE. Walks and driveways: Present brick walks are all 20th century.

FF. Landscaping, gardens: 19th century photographs indicate trees along the west side of the house. None of the present planting can be very old.

David Gebhard  
August 6, 1965

APPROVED: *Charles S. Pope*  
Charles S. Pope, AIA  
Supervising Architect, Historic Structures  
Western Office, Design and Construction  
National Park Service

DATE: *Sept 2, 1965*